

AND

HIS ADMINISTRATION.

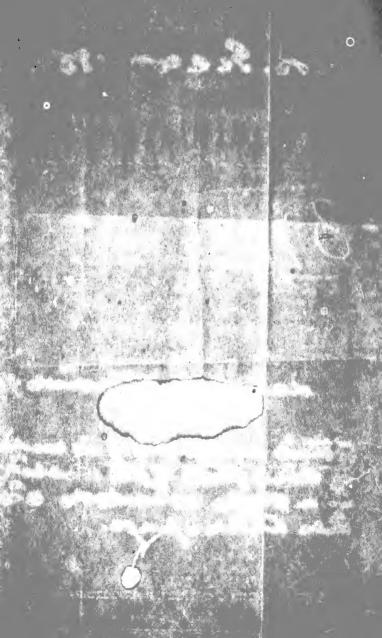
BEING

A REVIEW OF THE "RIVAL ADMINISTRATIONS,"
LATELY PUBLISHED IN RICHMOND, AND
WRITTEN BY E. A. POLLARD, AUTHOR
OF THE "FIRST AND SECOND
YEARS OF THE WAR."

BY A. S. ABRAMS,

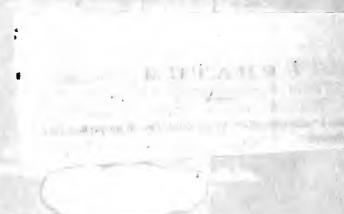
AUTHOR OF "A FULL AND DETAILED HISTORY OF THE SIEGE OF VICESBURG."

ATLANTA, GEORGIA: PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR. 1864.



ERRATUM.

For the word "misrepresented" on the tenth line in the preface, read "deemed offensive."



PRESIDENT DAVIS

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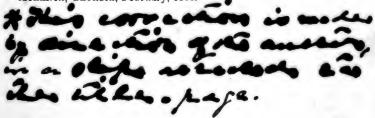
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PREFACE.

The object of this pamphlet is purely to review the late attack on the administration, and to do justice to those who have been placed in charge of the government, believing that Mr. Pollard has acted very unjustly towards the President and his Cabinet.

It having been said, by those who have seen the within pages, while in manuscript, that they may be construed into a personal attack on the author of the Rival Administrations, the author of this review, while declaring that his purpose is simply to defend the administration from Mr. Pollard's charges of incapacit, takes the folds himself personally responsible for every word contained therein.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, February, 1863.



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CHAPTER I.

History and historians are generally supposed to be truthful and impartial; narrating events as they occur, giving praise even to an enemy, when he deserves it, and only censuring where the voice of the people condemnt. This course has been pursued by all historians prior to the writing of the history of this revolution, when we find its uses corrupted with a view to circulate the venom of a partisan spirit, and under a semblance of magnanimous candor, an attempt to utter sentiments, not only false but utterly ignored and repudiated by the masses of the people.

We have been induced to these remarks, from reading a pamphlet containing a violent attack on the administration of President Davis, which is so palpably false that it would require no notice, did not a proper, regard for the statesman whom the people of the Confederate States have placed in the first position in the republic, demand that such gross perversion of truth, and a partisan attack, such as the "Rival Administrations" undoubtedly is, should be fully refuted and its malignity laid before the

people.

The following pages are not intended as a praise of the President. We are no partisan of the administration, as the thousands who have read the "History of the Siege of Vicksburg," and "Review of the War," can testify. Ours is but to defend from a gross and unmanly assault the President who, with all his faults, is universally acknowledged to be the most able man in the Confederate States. That he has erred in some instances we will not deny, but that his errors have been so serious as to warrant the attack made on him by the author of "The Rival Administrations," we not only deny, but endeavor to prove our denial.

3 CHAPTER II.

Let us take a glance back at years previous to the war, and we find Jefferson Davis holding a prominent position in the councils of the United States. Not only were his private qualities unimpeachable, and his literary ability of high order, but he was known as, and considered an able statesman in the Senate of the United States. To deny this fact is to speak falsely. None who are acquainted with the history of the causes which led to the disruption of the Union, can fail to recollect Jefferson Davis as holding a prominent position on the Southern side of the various questions then at issue, and considered as one of the most talented statesmen of this continent. To deny it, we have said, is false, and not only false, but a perversion of history. Jefferson Davis "had never been accounted as a statesman," how was it that the convention which met at Montgomery, Alabama, unanimously elected him President of the Provisional government? This question we deem sufficient to refute the statement of Mr. Pollard, that the President was never considered a statesman in the old government. His election was not the result of intrigue. He was hundreds of miles away when the convention elected him. In the quiet of his country home, like a second Cincinnatus, he received intelligence that he had been elected to preside over the destinies of the new-born republic. If he had never been considered a statesman, would his services have been sought after by a convention composed of the first statesmen of the South? Facts show the falsity of this statement, as well as the voice of impartial history.

We now enter upon President Davis' administration of the affairs of the Confederacy. The first charge brought against him is "his choice of officers in the field." In what manner has his choice of officers proved so detrimental to the South, when compared with the happy selections he has made? "The President depreciated Price as a militiaman," says Mr. Pollard; but that gentleman fails to tell us in what instance General Price has shown himself possessed of ability to fill a higher position than he now occupies. The fact is that General Price has been an over-estimated man, and the President knows it. With respect to his "light opinion of Beauregard," this is. simply false, as the conduct of the President towards that officer, after the battle of Manassas was of the most appreciative nature possible. It is true, that from some cause or other, the feeling between the President and General Beauregard has not been of as cordial a nature as could be desired, but the best account of the causes which led to such disagreement, state that it was from the refusal of the President to permit an advance of the Confederate army on Washington after the battle of Manassas. So far from having a poor appreciation, the President, we are certain, has the highest possible opinion of the

hero of Manassas, Shiloh and Charleston.

The next favorite the President is charged with having is General Pemberton.* Of this officer we are not prepared to say anything favorable. We have condemned him as incompetent before, and so consider him still. At the same time we see no reason why the President shall not conscientiously consider him an able office, and with that belief no one can blame him for retaining General Pemberton in his confidence. Of General Lovell no more need be said than the fact that he was lately acquitted of all charges of incompetency; while of General Bragg, the President never displayed greater ability and firmness than when he refused to relieve him from command, for not only are the military abilities of General Bragg appreciated by a large majority of his army, and the people, but by General Johnston-a military authority, we think, of some importance. These, then, are the "favorites" which President Davis is charged with having selected for the field, and "as unapt as his selection of political advisers in the cabinet."

Mr. Pollard says that "the civil administration of Mr. Davis had fallen to a low ebb." This is emphatically false. The President has ever been looked upon by the masses of the people as an able and efficient servant of the Confederacy, and as the only man in the South who could fill the office he holds with as much success. We speak the sentiments of the people, not the private opinions of a partisan feeling. That the administration possesses the confidence of the people, was made apparent on the tour of the President through the different States, a short time after the battle of Chicamauga. His reception was enthusiastic, and we cannot conceive how he would have been so well received by them, if his administration had fallen to so low an

But the utter perversion of facts becomes more glaring, when Mr. Pollard tells us that "there are certain minds which cannot see how want of capacity in our government, official shiftlessness, and the mismanagement of public affairs, yet consist with

^{*}While we will never attempt to deny that gross incompetency characterized the movements of General Pemberton, we must, nevertheless, from personal knowledge, deny that Vicksburg was ever surrendered before the sup ply of provisions were exhausted. The statement that the soldiers had to eat mules is not a "designing falsehood," for such was really the case; the writer of these lines having eaten the flesh of mules himself, for want of other meat. As a proof that there was no provisions remaining, except, perhaps, what was used in the hospitals, we would state that the Confederate forces remained without food from the Saturday the surrender took place until the following Monday, when they drew rations from the Federal stores, the commissary of our army being empty. These are facts, and we defy denial.

Mr. Pollard exhibits a deplorable ignorance of the position of the two armies in Mississippi, when he states that the "importunate entreaties of Bowen" were denied, on the "more unfortunate day of Big Black," when he (Bowen) had sent seven or eight couriers to Pemberton for reinforcements. This is not only false, but displays an unpardonable amount of ignorance. At the Battle of Big Black no reinforcements were ever sent for, because they were not needed. At the first attack of the enemy, the Confederate army, which had been defeated the day before, breke and retreated across the river.

The number of men compesing Grant's army was not 50,000 but \$0,000, a fact the writer learnt from the best Federal information, while a prisoner at Vicksburg. Fifty thousand men could not have defeated the Confederate army in the manner they did. * While we will never attempt to deny that gross incompetency characterized the movements

the undeniable facts of the success of our arms, and the great achievments of the Confederacy." Sensible and impartial minds cannot see it. Nor is it possible that in a revolution of this nature, confronted as the South is by a foe of great numbers and energy, the "valor and determination of the people may make considerable amends for the faults of its governors." It would be a matter of impossibility for the South to achieve a single success, were she not guided by the wisdom of a central power. The people are merely the followers of the rulers they have appointed to preside over the destinies of the country, and they would have no opportunity to show their "valor and determination" were they not led to it by those in authority.

Nor has the "history of this war proved one proposition clearly," "that in all its subjects of congratulation the 'statesmanship' of Richmond had little part in it." We also "demy the justice of this historical (?) judgment, which refuses to attribute to the official authorities of this government, such success as we have had in this war." No "history" of this war has yet been written. In the two volumes issued, and the pamphlet now before us, we find a narrative of the different civil and military operations compiled together, for the purpose of covering an unmanly attack upon the President. And when the assertion is broadly made that no success achieved by the South in this contest can be attributed to the administration, we not only deny it, but come prepared to show where the administration is worthy of, and has received the heartfelt praises of the country.

We will take a glance back at the fall of Fort Donelson and the evacuation of Nashville, and endeavor to find out what was the conduct of the administration in this emergency. The whole South teemed with invectives against General Albert Sydney Johnston. His soldiers commenced deserting him, and the people refused to enlist under his banner. In this emergency, the conduct of the administration was admirable. General Beauregard was sent to Tennessee, men and means were placed his disposal by the government in a most lavish manner, and a

glorious campaign was the result.

Let us look further back to the seven days of battle before Richmond. Were they solely the result of the "valor and de-

termination of the people?"

Again we view the action of the administration in the retreat of Bragg from Chattanooga—the brilliant victory of Chickamanga, and we ask if the people alone must receive praise for that success.

On another page Mr. Pollard says: "We do not know of any real and substantial particulars in which the administration of Mr. Davis has contributed to the war." Here is another assertion which can be refuted without saying a great deal. Look at the position which Mr. Davis' administration has placed the

South in, and who can remain blind to the good it has done. What revolutionary party, however strong, ever maintained as much territory as the South does at the present time, after three years of fighting? None! And to whom can we attribute

this "substantial" fact? Not to the people.

But if all the successes achieved by the South are to be attributed to the people alone, why shall they not be made to bear the responsibility of defeat? It is an outrage upon justice to charge the administration with being the cause of all the disasters which have occurred, and endeavor to gain the popularity of the people by declaring that they alone are to be praised for the successes of our arms. It is the practice of the demagogue and not the historian. Writers of history confine themselves to facts, and never allow their feelings of animosity to pervert truth and commit injustice.

CHAPTER III.

It is generally the case that after an enigma has been solved, all parties find out how simple it was, and one party will wonder at the dullness of another in not solving it, forgetful at the time that he was one of those whose want of penetration prevented its solution. This is the case with Mr. Pollard when he gravely tells the people that "it is mortifying indeed to look back upon the currents of our history, to observe the blindness and littleness of mind, the conceit, the perversity, the shortsighted management, in all which we have drifted into this present vastness of war and depths of distress." "Blindness and littleness of mind" are not appropriate terms, for neither the one or the other was shown. To the contrary, as soon as all hope for peace had departed, a powerful army was raised and put in the field. Jefferson Davis assumed control of a government, or rather revolutionary party, without its having any form of government. With the skill of a statesman he moulded that revolutionary party into a model government, in a few short weeks. Civil and military departments were put in operation with astonishing energy and rapidity. He measured the necessity of the South by the strength of the North. The President saw not before him a war of indefinite duration; no one saw it. It was a gift of far-sightedness which only the craven hearted and soi disant patriots possessed. None else saw it. Yancey, Cobb, Stephens and Benjamin, distinguished statesmen on the civil, and Johnston, Lee and Beauregard on the military side, failed to see an endless war. The President was not gifted with a glance into futurity. He saw seventy-five thousand Northern men first arrayed in arms against the South, and he prepared for that number. He next saw five hundred thousand, and he prepared for that number also. Did that exhibit "blindness" or "littleness of mind?" Surely there was no necessity for calling out the entire strength of the South at one time for the purpose of defeating a comparative handful of men. To have done so would have been short-sightedness indeed, and totally unworthy the statesman we claim Presidert Davis to be.

It is charged by Mr. Pollard that the administration, to have exhibited any marks of statesmanship, should have discovered that this war would be one of several years' duration, but he gives no one instance where such far-seeing statesmanship has been shown. Not on this continent, for Calhoun and Webster, the two farthest-seeing statesmen that America ever had, could never see a greater calamity occurring to this continent, than the disruption of the Union. They never saw war resulting Nor can we find in European history any evidence of such far-seeing statesmanship as that desired by Mr. Pollard. Take as an instance the wars which raged during the time of Napoleon Buonaparte. Surely no far-seeing statesmanship was exhibited in Europe at that period. None of the statesmen of that continent saw in the ruler of France, a man who would deluge nearly every nation on that continent with blood. Is it, then, a wonder that the administration should have failed to see that the war would extend to years? The idea is ridiculous; itis devoid of sound reasoning.

Referring to the neglect of the Confederate Government to purchase and provide all the necessary appliances of warfare, Mr. Pollard says that "Secretary Mallory laughed off contractors in New Orleans, who offered to sell to the government a large amount of navy supplies." On what grounds is this assertion made? We have good reasons for knowing, that not only was a large quantity of navy supplies purchased in New Orleans for the department, but all in fact that could be got atthat time in the city, and a large quantity, had to be sent from Memphis to New Orleans to complete the cotton clad fleet which was built there. Here then is an assertion made without waiting to ascertain the fact, but purely, as we suppose, on the statement of irresponsible parties. We shall, however, refer to the subject of the Navy Department in another chapter.

Immediately below this tirade against the Secretary of the Navy, we find Judah P. Benjamin and the President charged with short-sightedness for expressing their opinion (in the Fall of 1862) that the war would soon come to an end. The position of the Confederacy warranted the opinion that the war would soon come to an end. The North had commenced to exhibit signs of dissatisfaction at the reverses her arms had methodizing the past months. European nations were also of opinion that the war could not last much longer. The "great poli-

ticians" of England, in public speeches, expressed their convictions that the North could never regain her lost power over the Southern States. The brilliant campaigns of Lee in Virginia, Bragg in Tennessee, Taylor in Louisiana, and the successful defence of Vicksburg, combined to form and strengthen the "solemn opinion that the war would soon come to an end." Nor was there any "want of foresight and judgment displayed by the Confederate leaders, in their calculation at the different periods of the war, of the course likely to be pursued by Europe and the North." It was never doubted that the North could fight, but there was a strong doubt if she would; not because she was "a commercial community, devoted to the pursuit of gain," but because her past history, unlike those of "Carthage, Venice, Genoa, Holland and England," showed that their belligerent powers were not of the highest order. Take, as an instance, the Mexican war, and we find that the North, although two-thirds as populous as the South, sent only one-third of the total amount of men who volunteered.

These facts are, in themselves, possessed of great weight, and from them must Statesmen form ideas of the political status of a people. The history of one nation, which we find "in books," is not likely to be the history of another. It is, therefore, absurd to charge the Administration with short sightedness, because it failed to see what no one saw until time had developed it. Such charges are but the emanations of a mind filled with a vain conceit of its own intellectual penetration, when in fact it only shows us what every body else have seen developed

through passing events.

Mr. Pollard's "hasty and passionate" attack on the Administration for its "calculations regarding France and England," is the most "ludicrous," as well as false one, that we have ever seen in print. He tells us "the idea is ludicrous, now that, at the very beginning of the American revolution, France and England, with their centuries of vast and varied experience in peace and war, would fling themselves into a convulsion which their great politicians easily saw was the most tremendous of modern times." We see nothing "ludicrous" in the idea, for the past policy of England and France, as well as those advantages which a disruption of the American Union gave them, made it very natural to entertain the opinion that they would be willing to recognize the independence of the Confederacy as soon as it had given sufficient evidence of its ability to maintain it.* Nor was this even necessary, for when we look at the

south could never be conquered, and France went so far as to make propositions to England for an united action in regard to American affairs. Both these offers were rejected, not because England doubted the ability of the South to maintain her independence, but because her interest prompted a continuance of the war. The South was thus left alone, and a war allowed to continue, only to gratify the selfish spirit of an European nation. It may sound very strange for a clitical of the South to accuse a foreign government of a continuation of the war, and thus implying that the Confederacy had no ability to stop it herself. Such is not our idea. That

conduct of England toward Greece, Italy, and other countries' which have regained or achieved independence by revolution, we find that she has either recognized their nationality, or lent them material aid. Besides which, the universally acknowledged sovereignty of the different States, composing the Confederacy and their claim to the right of secession, give the Administration a further right to claim recognition. We shall not, however, attempt to prove any further the claim of the Confederacy for recognition; President Davis has shown that in his State papers, in the most unquestionable manner possible; sufficient to say, that even the press of those foreign governments, which Mr. POLLARD seems so desirous of defending, have acknowledged the legality of the claim set up by the President.

The foregoing defense of England is followed by the remark, that "at the commencement of the war cotton was pronounced "King,' and the absurd and puerile idea was put forward by the politicians of the Davis' school, that the great and illustrious power of England would submit to the ineffable humiliation of acknowledging its dependence on the infant Confederacy of the South." Here we find no just and truthful statement of the causes which made cotton pronounced "King." We are shown no grounds on which the rulers of the South based their argument in favor of cotton. All that we see in this attack, is an attempt to defend England against the well merited rebuke which President Davis has administered to that nation. It looks, in fact, more like a desire to court popularity among the government and people of Eugland, by defending them in a cause which even their own journals have declared partial and That there is any argument in this defense of the

the South has the ability to bring this war to a successful issue, we not only firmly believe, bu know it as a fact. Still, to review the conduct of Great Britain, so far as it is connected with this war, no one can fall to see, that had any revolutionary party in Europe achieved half the successes that the South achieved in the year of 1562, she would not only have recognised it,

but have been an ally.

It was not slavery alone which prevented the interference of England in this struggle,—Strongly prejudiced as she is against the "peculiar institution" of the South, and, great as is the obstacle which it places before recognition, it could have been summanted, but for the good which the war has done to the shipping and mercantile interests of that country. Cotton was and is a great consideration with them. Its loss has reduced to beggart thousands who depended on that staple for support. Of this, however, England cares but little. No matter that this continent be deluged with blood, and from every home in Manchester and Lancashire the

this continent be defuged with blood, and from every home in Manchester and Lancashre unery of starvation ascends, she will never move a step to covide it, while ston hisry increases her boasted mercantile superiority on the water, and adds so much additional gold to her revenue. Such was the political position of the Confederacy with Europe, or strictly speaking, with England and France, in the year 1862. That the South had a perfect right to expect recognition, no impartial mind can deny. She had just emerged from a campaign which had covered her arms with glory, and made her illustrious in history. She had driven from her soil in disgrace and humiliating rout, a for numbering not less than six hundred thousand of the flower of the North. From a nonulation of eight millions she has raised an army of four hundred of the North. From a population of eight millions she has raised an army of four hundred thousand men—a number never before known in any nation of the same strength in population. On all sides she contronted the fee with bands of patriots flushed with recent victories, and filled with determination. It was a situation never before known in the annals of a revolution. filled with determination. It was a situation never before known in the annals of a revolution. History does not show a single instance where a revolutionary party ever maintained the integrity of their soil with as much success as did the Confederacy. All these facts combined, make it apparent that the anticipations of recognition by the South, was perfectly rational, under the circumstances. She had fairly earned it, and had recognition followed after the battle of Sharpsburg, the North would have been willing to recognize the South also, but the cold-ness of foreign countries encouraged her to further efforts at subjugation, and the result was a continuation of the war, with greater fary than bad heretofore distinguished it.—Review of the Was Chanter XII. War, Chapter XII.

"great and illustrious power of England," we deny; it is written for the eyes of the English reader, and not for that of the

Confederate.

We will not deny that the Confederate authorities made a great mistake in not purchasing the entire cotton crop of the South at the commencement of the war. It would have given the South the command of an immense amount of specie had the whole crop arrived safely at foreign ports, but we very much doubt if such a thing could have been done. Another great miscalculation of Mr. Pollard is, that it would have yielded "two shillings sterling;" it could never have yielded much more than one, although that would have left the government a large profit.

CHAPTER IV.

. While we are not able to declare Mr. Memminger wholly guiltless of causing the depreciation of the currency by his maladministration of the Treasury Department, we must, nevertheless, insist that he is not wholly responsible for it. There are other and equally important causes which led to its rapid depre-

ciation, and these we will endeavor to point out.*

Mr. Pollard tells us, with considerable bitterness, that "in February, 1862, President Davis had made the most extravagant congratulation to the country on our financial condition, in comparison with that of the North," and "in less than eighteen months thereafter, when gold was quoted in New York at twenty-five per cent. premium, it was selling in Richmond at nine hundred per cent. premium; and by the time that the Confederate Congress met in December, 1863, gold in Richmond was worth about two thousand per cent. premium, and was publicly sold one for twenty in Confederate notes." The truth of this statement none can deny, as the present price of specie shows; at the same time we find that the causes of this is not as much owing to "the financial wisdom" of the Confederate Administration as to the conduct of the people in their reckless and prodigal expenditure of the currency. The causes

^{*}It is altogether a mistaken idea on the part of some people in the Confederacy, that block-ade running has aided to any considerable degree in the depreciation of the currency. The fact is, that it aided in keeping it up than otherwise; which assertion is made apparent from the fact, that the goods which are imported into the South are generally purchased with the proceeds of cotton previously exported. It would thus render the currency better instead of depreciating it, for the importing into the Confederacy of large quantities of articles not mansepreciating it, for the importing into the Confederacy of large quantities of articles not manufactured in her limits, would occasion a reduction in prices naturally inflated by reason of scarcity. This has been overlooked by a great many who have been so cager to denounce the system of blockade running, but if the subject were given the consideration it deserves, they would find that it is more deserving of praise than of censure.

In Mr. Pollard's "Second Year of the War," he charges the brokers of the Confederacy with being aiders and abetters in depreciating the currency, and only allows exceptions to the generality. This is an error, for the reason that a majority of these same brokers are true and

which must be laid down as the source of depreciation, are these: A superabundant amount of money afloat, being five or six times more than was necessary for the business of the

country.

This, Mr. Memminger endeavored to prevent by offering inducements to the holders of the treasury notes to fund. This was, no doubt, a most excellent plan of keeping the currency within a prudent limit, but failed from causes which we shall hereafter relate.

The next cause was the action of the people in taking advantage of the necessities of the government, and the scarcity of food, to place enormous valuation on their products, and which was paid from the absolute necessity for all possessed by these

speculators and extortioners.

This is, without doubt, the principal cause of the depreciation of Confederate treasury notes. Both the planter and the merehant must be blamed for it, and not the administration.— These two classes of the people made a necessity which never existed, and by their extortion compelled the issuance of a much larger amount of money that would have been expended, had the price of any supplies been held at the same rates as when the war first commenced. To prove this argument does not require much words. It must be plain to all, that where the government has to pay six dollars per bushel for wheat at the present time, it throws upon the country four dollars more of the currency than would otherwise have been expended had the price continued at two dollars, which was the outside cost of wheat at the commencement of the war.

The last cause was the conduct of a few traitors in our midst, who purchased gold with treasury notes as fast as they accumulated them, and thus caused the great advance on the price

of specie.

After the currency had depreciated five hundred per cent. it

toyal citizens of the South. Those who sold Federal currency publicly in Richmond are traitors to their country, and should not cause the whole of that class, which follow the profession of brokers, to bear an ill name. For a broker to deal in gold and silver coin, is no more than he has been always accustomed to do, while his profits at the present time are much smaller than those of any other business. For instance, where they pay eighteen and half dollars in Confederate currency for one in gold, they sell the same for twenty, being a profit not exceeding nine per cent. In making these remarks we do not intend to defend the brokers, we only desire to show a few facts.

It may be said that if even this could have been carried out, that the number of bonds thrown on the market from the purchase of cotion, would have been so large that they would have depreciated as soon as ireasury notes. We see no reason for such argument, from the fact that such bonds bearing eight per cent, interest, the man who was possessed of fifty thousand dollars worth, would have been more disposed to receive four thousand dollars per annum from the interest, than to have sold it for gold at a depreciated rate. It would not have been looked upon as money, but as an article of remunerative worth, and when we consider that eight per cent, was looked upon as a large prifit, before the depreciation of treasury notes, we cannot fail to see that capitalists would have eagerly bought them, not only at but above par. The issuance of treasury notes, with bonds at the same time, would naturally tend to depreciate the value of the latter, for the constant influx of the treasury notes naturally increases the price of all articles, and with them the profits. Thus, when treasury notes had depreciated one who could make ten thousand dollars on an other of the wenty thousand dollars in treasury notes, would take these same notes and purchase tweuty thousand dollars of bonds to receive an interest of only sixteen hundred in the same currency.—Review of the War.

was absolutely ridiculous to quote it at a specie valuation. Gold, silver and foreign exchange then became mere articles of merchandize, worth more than anything else; they could not be looked upon as money, simply for the reason that they were never used as such in the Confederacy, and we had no commer-

cial dealings with the outside world.

The comparison between the North and South, on the finance question, is unjust to the administration, and absurd in itself.-The cause of the currency of the United States not depreciating as rapidly as that of the South, is attributable to several reasons. In the North there has always been more wheat and other cereals raised than was necessary for her population, and which surplus was sold to the South previous to the war. After the war commenced and all commerce ceased this surplus became a drug on the holders, who willingly sold it at a low price for any kind of money that would purchase other articles. this instance the supply exceeded the demand, and wherever this occurred we find that money is appreciated. Another great assistance to the currency of the United States was their large population, as well as their free and unrestricted trade with the world. They were in a much better condition to absorb a large amount of paper money than the South, who had no other source of using the treasury notes circulated in her midst, than by a system of speculation alike dishonorable and unpatriotic.

While we cannot say much in defence of Mr. Memminger, there is one thing certain, that the people have been as much to blame as the Secretary of the Treasury. We acknowledge that short sighted financial ability was exhibited in the administration of the treasury department, but we insist that the evils which resulted from such administration, were made doubly aggravated by the unpatriotic and suicidal conduct of those who possessed the mass of the currency, in not funding as offered, and the speculating and extorting spirit of the merchant and farmer in creating a necessity where none existed in reality.

CHAPTER V.

The next subject which comes under Mr. Pollard's notice, "is the disclosure from the Confederate Secretary of War, Mr. James Seddon, that the effective force of the army was not more than a half, never two-thirds of the numbers in the ranks," and this fact is attributed wholly and solely to the Secretary or, to use Mr. Pollard's words, "the fault of his own administration, the remissness of discipline, the weak shunning of the death penalty in our armies, and that paltry quackery which

proposed to treat the great evil of desertion with 'proclama-

tions and patriotic appeals."

Here we have a perfect plethora of charges brought against the administration of the war department; the first of which is said to be "the fault of his non-administration." This is not correct. It is hazarding an assertion which cannot be proven. In what manner has the administration of Mr. Seddon influenced descrition and absentecism from the Confederate army? Surely, in making such a charge, the grounds on which they are made might have been given. We see no cause to censure Mr. Seddon's administration of the War Department. On the contrary, his conduct, since his appointment to that office, has created great satisfaction among the people, who were apprehensive that the resignation of Mr. Randolph would leave the vacant place difficult to fill in an efficient manner.

The next charge, of "remissness of discipline," is only partially correct, and must be laid to the officers and not to the administration. All orders necessary to the strict enforcement of discipline are issued by the War Department, and if the commanders of troops, by their neglect of duty, cause desertion and absenteeism from the army, and the fact of such neglect is not reported to the War Department, no blame can be attached thereto for any such remissness. Commanding Generals, and not the Secretary of War, must be held responsible, for the soldiers who are thus remiss in discipline, are under their immediate eye, and it is their duty to enforce a proper obedience

of the regulations.

A "weak shunning of the death penalty in our armies" follows the last charge, and here Mr. Pollard again falls into error. Death has been inflicted too often, and without any effect on the comrades of those who have died thus disgracefully. What then was left to the government, when punishment failed to act as a warning to others who deserted or absented themselves from the ranks. Appeals to their patriotism were not only needed, but served the purpose of restoring many to the ranks who would never have gone otherwise. In not one of the charges enumerated above, do we find sufficient explanation for the desertion and absenteeism from our army, while other causes, more truthful, are neglected, because they reflect directly upon the people, whose good opinions is what Mr. Pollard appears most to desire.

One great cause of the absenteeism and desertion from the Confederate army, can be found in the conduct of the people at home. A soldier leaves his family at home, and serves his country for the miserable pittance of eleven dollars per month.*

^{*}On a late visit to the "Army of Tennessee," we were in communication with a soldier who had been sentenced to wear a barrel shirt as a punishment for absenting himself without leave for some weeks. On inquiring the cause which led to desertion, we heard that his wife and children were in destitute condition, on account of the depreciation of the currency, and their inability to make a sufficiency of it, and had written acquainting him of her deplorable position.

During his absence, the short-sighted policy of the government. aided by a heartless crowd of speculators and extortioners, depreciates the currency of the country to such a degree that it takes a large sum of it to support his family. They have no way of obtaining the required amount, and consequently great destitution ensues. The result is that the soldier deserts. can be blamed for this? Not the Secretary of War; it is the people—they whose property the soldier fights to protect—who cause desertion from the army. They have either caused the family of a soldier to suffer for want of food, or have instilled their cowardly fears in his breast, and thus influenced him to desert. To the people—that is those at home—must be attributed the frequent desertions from the army. It is an undeniable fact, whatever may be said on the subject. Experience has shown it, and communication with the soldiers will prove it. The other causes which lead to desertion and absenteeism are but small, when brought in comparison with the statements above. This is the ground we have taken upon the subject, and

impartial history will agree with us.

The attack of Mr. Pollard on the Secretary of War, for recommending "the supercedure of all exemptions by a system of details in the War Department," is unworthy in every respect. We cannot see that "such measures were finished pieces of demagogueism." We recognize it, and so do all impartial minds, as a patriotic desire to place every man in service who owes duty to the country. It was for the purpose of removing all chances of fraud in the granting of exemptions, and so the motive appeared to every unbiassed mind in the Confederacy. The term "demagogueism" cannot be fitly applied to Mr. Seddon's propositions to Congress. There is no single way in which they could recommend him in the eyes of the soldiers, other than a natural admiration for his solicitude for the great cause in which we are engaged. It is a mistaken idea on the part of some, that the soldier is blind to the importance of having a portion of the able-bodied men of the South exempt. appreciate the necessity more than they do, or will be more eager to grant the claims of the exempt. It is, therefore, but a poor charge, when the accusation of demagogueism is brought against the Secretary of War, for performing an act which he thought both conscience and duty required of him.

With respect to the recommendation to annul the exemptions heretofore granted to those who had furnished substitutes, we see no just cause to term it an act of perfidy. The government gained nothing by permitting those who furnished substitutes

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With all his love of country, the affections of a husband and father relgned paramount in his heart, and he deserted. On arriving at home, he found that his wife had not exaggerated in her statement, but was in a dreadful situation. After being with her for some time, he was arrested, carried back to the army, tried and sentenced. The tone of manly candor with which he spoke impressed us favorably, and though we did not think any inducement sufficient to excuse desertion, we left him with a sigh of regret at his unhappy position.

to be exempt, nor was any contract ever made between these parties and the government. It was merely a privilege accorded by Congress, to exempt from military duty any one subject to conscription, who placed a substitute in the army for three years. It does not state how long the principal shall be exempt, while it distinctly required that the substitute should enter the service for a given number of years. What "argument of the despot," what "infamy," what "perfidy" can be charged, with any truth, against the administration in this respect? The idea is ridiculous, and would be laughed at by the poorest lawyer in the Confederacy, were his opinion asked upon the legality or illegality of the law annuling substitution and calling into service the principals.

CHAPTER VI.

The question of retaliation is one which became perfectly futile after the enemy held a larger number of prisoners than the South did, for though we may all bitterly deplore the outrages committed by the enemy, and become justly indignant at them, we must, nevertheless, recollect that retaliation at any time when it was called for by the acts of the Federals, was not only dangerous, but would have resulted in the sacrifice of many of our men, whose lives were of far greater value than those of the Federals. It has been a noticeable fact, that while the Confederate Government held a greater or equal number of prisoners in its possession, no act was committed by the United States authorities which called for retaliation. It was only, as in the present case, when that government possessed a majority of prisoners that any necessity existed for such a retaliation. What then could be expected on the part of the Confederate authorities? Take as an example the case of the two Yankee officers who were drawn by lots to die, in retaliation for the murder of Captains Corbin and McGraw by Burnside. Was not the life of such a man as the son of General Lee, worth more than those of the two Federal officers? Such was the opinion of all, and none regretted that the Confederate authorities did not put their threat in execution.

The fact is, that the question of retaliation should never have been left to the government. It was one of great delicacy for the administration of a people to sanction, much less to order, and its being forced directly under the notice of the government was an act of the people which could and should bave been avoided. In all the outrages committed by Federal officers and soldiers, it is a significant fact that not one has been directly upheld or approved by the United States government. It is true that whenever an explanation was demanded it was always shirked by some paltry device, which indicated an indirect if

not a direct approval; still it had never officially countenanced these outrages. Retaliation should have been left to the officers and men of the Confederate army, as was recently exhibited in North, Carolina. To force it on the government, is to place it in a doubtful position, for it would be an act unworthy of a civilized nation, to set deliberately to work and order the execution of a prisoner in retaliation for a murder committed by

an enemy months previous. For both governments to commence, officially, the blood-thirsty retaliation desired by Mr. Pollard, is to merge this war from that of a civilized one into that of extermination; or, in other words, a literal raising of the "black flag." Is such a thing desired by the soldiers of the Confederate army? With the risk of being charged with slandering our brave armies, by those men who loudly call for the "black flag" and "retaliation" in the security of their homes, we declare they are not. There is scarcely a man in the service who is not bitterly opposed to any act of the Confederate Government which would reduce this war to the same condition as those carried on by Attilla, Genghis, Khan and other barbarians. This is a fact which we assert from personal knowledge and long intercourse with the army, and one which we deem incontrovertible.

Referring to President Davis' message to Congress, and the remarks he made relative to the valorous conduct of the enemy, Mr. Pollard charges him with having neglected to say a word of his "threatenings with respect to retaliation," and goes on to say that "they are a record of bluster, and an exhibition of weakness and shame, upon which the President might well turn his back." This is ridiculous and malicious. Ridiculous, because it maks capital of a subject which was not of sufficient value to the people, so far as President Davis' conduct in not noticing it laid; and malicious, because it gave an opportunity for heaping another paragraph of abuse upon the President, both undeserved by him and unworthy of the writer.

CHAPTER VII.

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Few men in public position have escaped censure, and it were absurd to expect that President Davis should escape what a Washington received, still, there are times when such censure becomes wholly undeserved, and merges from a desire to serve the country, into a desire to serve the private ends of a partisan spirit, filled with prejudice and blind to everything but a hope for the removal or defamation of the party against whom such prejudice is directed. We do not accuse Mr. Pollard of being actuated by a desire to have President Davis removed, or by his hasty and unjust attacks, cause him to resign, still it must

be apparent, to all who have read his "First and Second Years of the War," and the "Rival Administrations," that nothing

but an undeserved prejudice actuated that gentleman.

When we look on the work performed by the administration, and the successes which have attended it, all the errors committed become insignificant. The formation of this government in the midst of an excitement consequent upon the secession of the different States; the organization of armies which have become the terror of enemies, the wonder of the world, and the pride of friends; and last, though the most important of all, the long list of brilliant victories which have crowned the banners of the Confederacy, are proof enough of the ability and energy of the administration. When the question is asked, what has the present Secretary of War done? Justice points to the present condition of our armies; their improvement, both in numbers and morale, to what they were three months ago, and the voice of censure is silent. To blame Mr. Seddon for any of the disasters which have occured during his administration, is both false and ridiculous. So far from deserving blame, just praise is due to him for the very efficient manner in which he has performed the duties of Secretary of War. The causes of this censure of Mr. Seddon becomes apparent, however, in the "little piece of history" which Mr. Pollard gives the public in his "Rival Administrations." It appears more like a feeling of unmanly jealousy at the chance afforded a literary rival, by the exemption granted. We feel certain that good reasons must have been laid before the Secretary of War to have induced him to grant an exemption to the party alluded to, and if report speaks true, that he is the author of "Causes and Contrasts," we can easily believe that the history of the war he is engaged in compiling, will be of greater service to the Confederate cause than the partial and partisan compilation of events presented to the public by the author of the "Rival Administrations."

As with the Secretary of War, so with the other officers in authority, and we need say no more on the subject. At some other time we may be induced to give to the public the causes which have led to this gross abuse of President Davis and his administration; at present we will close this brief work by observing that it would be preferable for the North to overrun twice as much Southern soil as she already has, than for the Confederacy to lose the services of Jefferson Davis. With all his faults there is none in the Confederacy who possesses the high administrative talent that he does, and though the voice of malice and censure may endeavor for awhile to deprive him of that praise he has so well merited by his successful administration of the government, the time will surely come when he will receive the thanks and blessings of a free people, and he looked upon as the Second Washington of the Southern States

of America.



